

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY
VETERANS ADVISORY COUNCIL MINUTES**

San Diego County Veterans Service Office
5560 Overland Avenue, Suite 310, San Diego CA 92123
July 9, 2016

Meeting Held at the Veterans Museum and Memorial Center in Balboa Park (VMMC)

MEMBERS PRESENT

Michael Robledo, Chair, District 5; Nancy Owen, Co-Chair, Member at Large; Benjamin Dillingham, Member at Large; Mary Beth Newton, District 1; John Weaver, District 4; Ted Kagan, District 2; Laurie Martell, District 3.

MEMBERS ABSENT

William Rodriguez, Member at Large (U)

OTHERS PRESENT

Wilfred Quintong, County of San Diego Military & Veterans Affairs Officer; John Alexander, Vets Caring for Vets Organization; Ray Flores, Executive Director San Diego Veterans Coalition.

1. Call to Order

Meeting called to order by Michael Robledo, Chair

2. Pledge of Allegiance

3. Introductions/Public (3 minutes)

4. Approval of Minutes Previous Meeting

Motion to approve the June's meeting minutes by Ben Dillingham seconded by John Weaver, approved by all.

5. Chairman's Report

Legislative:

Ben Dillingham spoke about an In-Vitro Fertilization article in the paper. The VA does not cover IVF for service members forced into retirement due to their injuries. The Senate passed a large

appropriations bill that included provision to overturn this old health law. Currently veterans have to pay for the procedure.

He also spoke about another article. The ACLU is conducting a study on veterans without citizenship being mistreated and deported if they pick up a criminal conviction losing their medical benefits and not being allowed back in the country. Congressman Juan Vargas is planning to introduce a legislation that would have the military taking a more active role in getting noncitizens military members to apply for citizenship while in the service, also, making sure that deported veterans have access to healthcare.

Wil Quintong noted Aging and Independent Services (AIS) has members of their advisory council in the California Senior Legislature team (CSL). Ted Kagan is 1 of 9. Wil asked if anyone knew if the State has something like that for veterans' advisory council members to go to Sacramento and attend meetings bring back information on legislative issues that pertain to the state. He will research this through Cal vet. Laurie Martel will also follow up with the Cal vet Veterans Advisory Council Board.

One VA

Nancy attended the One VA meeting and shared the following topics that were discussed:

Miramar National Cemetery has buried 9132 since they opened. Fort Rosecrans National Cemetery has 114,000. Fort Rosecrans continues to open up space for active military casualties. The cemetery has a new Assistant, Graham Wright the III from Biloxi and Ann Adelle Administrative Officer.

Vietnam Era Commemorations pins and certificates will be provided by the VA as long as they have them for any organization or gathering that wants to commemorate.

Ben Dillingham spoke about the VA considering changing their regulations to allow gender surgery for veterans. Mr. Dillingham thinks is important for this organization to take a proactive stand in encouraging the VA to this this.

Chula Vista Veterans Home (CVVH)

Nancy Owen updates:

CVVH next meeting will be in September.

CVVH just celebrated their 16th Founders day on the 16th.

Wil Quintong asked if there are new updates on the Memory Care Unit. Nancy said Assembly member Lorena Gonzalez and Supervisor Greg Cox are keeping this issue alive but funding for staffing still is the biggest issue.

United Veterans Council (UVC)

No update

Office of Military & Veterans Affairs (OMVA)

Ray Flores spoke about the San Diego Veterans Coalition's new technology being implemented. It provides support to veterans, active duty or in transition, to be able to track or maintain their history by developing a profile and this way he can be assisted through an extension of the resources from one provider to the next without the veterans having to go over the process with each provider. Once the technology matures it can maybe become predictive for milestones or what the average will be at a certain period of the veteran's life to anticipate services. The SDVC is moving forward and meeting with the software provider.

Wil Quintong informed the VAC that Vet-Connect has been implemented at the Poway Library. We also have a representative once a month in the City of Chula Vista library; We also have been approached by the downtown and Coronado city libraries for services.

The Board approved the addition of 2 new Veteran Services Representatives and 1 Office Assistant. These are new positions.

Wil Quintong reminded Stand Down is on July 22 and OMVA will be directly involved. He encouraged everyone to volunteer if they can.

Wil's goal for the VAC is to make it relevant. He wants the members to start by contacting each one of the district office representatives and brief their respective Supervisors.

6. Community Reports

John attended the Bi-annual Vietnam Veterans of American convention said it was very well attended.

Nancy Owen noted yesterday, July 8, was the first year anniversary of the passing of Admiral Shea Buckley. She was buried at Arlington National Cemetery.

Ben added that tonight, at St Paul Episcopal Cathedral, there is an event "We are one people" where the catholic Bishop Robert McElroy will be attending. Attendees will be a combination

of the gay and hispanic community commemorating the Orlando hate crime and the significance of it.

7. Unfinished Business

None

8. New Business

None

9. Closing Remarks

Reminder by Wil Quintong for VAC to complete their mandatory Ethics training if they are due. Concerns were raised by Ben Dillingham as to why this council is required to take this training since is a voluntary position. Wil will post the question to the clerk of the Board and follow up.

Michael Robledo, new chair, thanked Mary Beth Newton for her services as chair for the last 2 year.

10. Adjourned

Meeting was adjourned at 10:30 am